

Shedding Some Light on Sunscreen

July is National UV Safety Month



Summertime. Beach time. Long hours in the sun. Before you head out to the white hot sand, you'll want to pick up some sunscreen. But should you buy SPF 15? SPF 30? How about 45?

Should you get a sun block? A sunscreen? Something that's waterproof?

If you're confused by the numbers and types of sunscreen, you're not alone. Some people may be so confused by sunscreens that they don't use them: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that only about 30 percent of adults regularly use sunscreen.

But take heart. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is writing new rules for sunscreen labeling, to help consumers figure out just what they need. All sunscreen products sold over the counter will need to follow certain labeling standards, and any SPF rating must have been tested to pass muster.

The FDA has proposed creating a new SPF category called 30-plus for any sun protection factor above 30. It has also proposed reducing five sun protection categories to three: minimum, moderate, and high. No longer will terms such as "sunblock" and "waterproof" be allowed on labels, because they are inaccurate, the FDA says.

The agency has also listed 16 active ingredients, including zinc oxide and avobenzone, that are allowed in sunscreens.

In addition, the labels will also need to include a statement that emphasizes the importance of sunscreen in preventing skin problems and other harmful effects of the sun.

How Do Sunscreens Work?

When ultraviolet (UV) rays strike the skin, they cause changes, including mutations in DNA. These mutations affect how well the DNA controls cell division, and can lead to cancer, experts say. The longer the skin's exposure to the sun, the greater the risk of developing skin problems.

Sunscreens work by absorbing and reflecting UV rays, preventing them from penetrating the skin. No sunscreen can block out 100 percent of the UV rays, however. That's why terms like "sunblock" are inaccurate.

Because sunlight contains both UVA and UVB rays, it's important to select a sunscreen that blocks both kinds, experts say. Try to avoid any sun exposure to children under 6 months of age, but for all children over 6 months of age and all adults going out into the sun, use a sunscreen. Lighter

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skinned people, particularly those with red or blond hair, are at greatest risk for burning.

Tips for Avoiding the Sun

Stay out of the sun, particularly from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when the sunlight -- and the UV rays -- are strongest. Look for shade, but be aware that a beach umbrella or shade tree can't block all UV rays. And a bright beach or snow-covered ground causes the UV rays to bounce around.

You are still at risk on cloudy days, because clouds block only about 20 percent of UV rays.

If you must be out in the sun, cover up with loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirt and pants to protect your skin.

Wear a hat with a brim three to four inches wide to protect your face, head, neck, and ears.

Wear sunglasses that block as much UVA and UVB rays as possible. Sunglasses that wrap around your eyes are best, because they block UV rays from the sides.

Apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 and one that offers protection from both UVA and UVB rays. Use at least an ounce of sunscreen each time you apply it. Reapply every couple hours, or more frequently if you are swimming or sweating.

Remember that water doesn't block UV rays. Even if you spend most of your day in the water, you still need sunscreen.

Children need protection from the sun, too. Give your child a wide-brimmed hat and don't forget the sunscreen.

Warning Signs of Skin Cancer

Up to 1 million Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer each year, and experts say that number is on the rise.

Skin cancer comes in three types: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma. The first two types are the most common forms of skin cancer and are easily treated. If left untreated, however, they can cause

disfigurement, but they aren't deadly.

Although melanoma is less common, it is more serious. If caught early, it is almost always curable. Melanoma is more likely than the other two forms of skin cancer to spread to other organs in the body.

The American Cancer Society and other experts urge people to regularly examine their skin for new moles or moles that change their shape or color.

The risk factors for melanoma include: moles, particularly a type called an atypical mole; fair skin; family history of melanoma; people whose immune system has been suppressed; large doses of UV radiation through sun exposure; severe, blistering sunburns, especially during childhood.

For more information on skin health:

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm049091.htm>

<http://wellnesswrp.personaladvantage.com/content?sub=10001463>

Dealing with Deadline Stress

You may be familiar with the feeling -- the knot in your stomach caused by the fear of not getting a report, presentation, or project done on time. The countdown goes down to the very last minute when you can say, "It's done!"

Sometimes no matter how hard and fast you work, you miss your deadline, adding to your physical and emotional stress. This isn't a healthful way to work, and it also can be damaging to your career.

"Missing deadlines is a sign of a non-committed employee in the minds of many managers and is unacceptable workplace behavior," says Chris S. Frings, Ph.D., a professional speaker and author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Effective Time Management*. "Procrastination, unrealistic deadlines, and/or lack of appropriate prioritization are why most deadlines are missed. People also

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frequently start too late to work on a project with a deadline. Waiting until the last minute to start something causes stress and often results in less than your best work."

Dr. Frings offers the following suggestions on how to stay on track:

Make It Interesting

Nobody likes boring work, so people tend to put it off until the last minute. The solution is to make up a game about such work to add excitement to it. For example, give yourself points for making progress on a project, then give yourself a reward for every 10 points.

Break It Down

Sometimes a job can be so overwhelming that it's difficult to even get started. If you're not clear about what to do or how to do it, ask for more specific directions. Then take that first step to get the ball rolling on the project.

Analyze Deadlines

Don't be afraid to tell your boss a project deadline is unrealistic. You may worry he or she will think you're slow and incompetent, but the opposite is true. It demonstrates your ability to analyze all the aspects of an assignment and evaluate how long each will take. It also shows your concern for getting things done on time.

"It's better to say something up front so you can either get a more realistic deadline or get extra help so you can meet the deadline," says Dr. Frings.

Prioritize Appropriately

You may put off doing a project with a deadline in order to do your daily urgent tasks. The problem is, your project may never get started.

"If you have multiple tasks, ask your supervisor to prioritize them so you know which are more important," Dr. Frings says. "Discuss the deadlines and how you can find time to meet them with him or her, too."

Allow for the Unforeseen

Projects usually take longer than you expect. Interruptions, delays, crises, and phone calls can eat up your time.

"Always plan extra time to meet your deadline," says Dr. Frings. "That way, you may even be able to turn in your work ahead of schedule, which will lower your stress and impress your boss."

Plan Ahead

If you have a deadline, you can plan to meet it by working backward from your due date. List everything that needs to be done and put a mini-deadline on it.

Finally, when faced with deadlines or other work, be sure to take care of yourself by eating right, exercising regularly, and taking time to decompress.

For more stress management information:

<http://wellnesswrp.personaladvantage.com/content?sub=10000515>

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Camping is another fun option for families. Kids love the adventure of setting up housekeeping outdoors and sleeping under the stars. You can experience the great outdoors in a variety of ways, from car camping to backpacking. If you prefer the comfort of a bed and four walls, many state and national parks rent cabins, with and without kitchen facilities.

For more information on family life:

<http://wellnesswrp.personaladvantage.com/content?sub=10002063>

The Importance of Vacations

A change of pace is essential to help you relax and balance the multiple demands in your life. Vacations with or without the kids let you recharge your batteries so you can put your best energies into your job as a parent and an employee.

Sometimes a vacation alone with your spouse is just what you need. This is especially true for families experiencing crises or major changes. For example, if you and your spouse are the parents of a rebellious teenager, you may not want to leave home unless trusted friends or relatives are available as caregivers. But a weekend away from teen turmoil may be just what you need to put your child's behavior into perspective and gain some peace of mind.

Family vacations also offer many rewards and a wide variety of ways to have fun. Independent family trips by car, boat, train, or plane, allow your family to discover new sights, landscapes, and cultures together. The excitement of exploring an unknown place can create a special feeling of family pride and adventure.

Before you travel, gauge your children's stamina and need for meals. On car and train trips, plan activities that involve kids in the sights and sounds along the way. Play games and bring coloring and story books that describe the places you plan to visit.